

North Ada County Foothills Association (NACFA)
City Council Election Candidate Survey
October 2009

For “check a block” questions, please feel free to add narrative in any/all cases to fully and accurately characterize your philosophy, approach or opinion.

A. Philosophy and Approach

1. Describe the role of an Eagle City Council member as you see it. What motivated you to seek a Council seat? Please discuss your views on the interests of Area of Impact (AOI) and foothills residents and the Council’s role in responding to them.

I see my role as a representative of the people within our community... That includes the residents living within our borders, the community of residents living in the AOI and those property owners and businesses in Eagle. My motivation to run stems from my observation that the city leadership (defined as the Mayor and the City Council, both past and present) have failed to make sound decisions, and have put our future at an avoidable level of risk... financially as well as future direction. As a City Council member, I would expect to help drive more thoughtful and full disclosure discussions for all major issues facing our City. I would seek to be directly involved with City operations details, and help to direct our City to operate far more efficiently than it does today. Fiscal responsibility is where my work would begin, since all other City decisions will derive their success from a strong financial foundation.

2. What do you think the City is currently doing well that you would continue to support? What does the City need to change...and why?

First, I see that we are blessed with a City staff of talented individuals that have demonstrated to me that they are motivated to do the right thing, as long as they are directed to do so. I believe we have a strong public safety relationship with our fire department and our police force. We have a beautiful library that we all consider to be a true asset to our community. We have a wonderful community setting throughout Eagle, and for the most part, all of the assets appear to be maintained well.

The area that I believe requires immediate change is: The failure of the City to become good stewards of their budget and finances. The City leadership and staff do not appear to have the knowledge or motivation to understand financial management nor does anyone show the attention to the ever-evolving economic climate that our City and community must deal with.

3. What are major issues facing the City in the next four years? Ten years? How would you approach each?

The most important issue that we must resolve in the next four years is stabilizing our financial condition. We must make the immediate adjustments and efficiencies in our City that set the stage for a sound plan to balance our budget and set aside the necessary

savings, and give us the ability to make the necessary investments in Eagle. Debt or increased taxes should not be an option unless blessed by the voters of our community.

In ten years (or sooner), I can see that water will be the primary issue face all Boise-based communities. If unrealistic plans for growth are allowed to continue, I believe we could be facing an area-wide water availability crisis that could be next to impossible to reverse. As with most all other issues that have and are facing Eagle, the City leadership operates in a reactionary method. I believe we need to change our leadership focus to drive more frontend analysis, then offer honest, open and clear explanation of the pro's and con's of all major issues about to be decided on.

4. The current comprehensive plan was adopted after a great deal of citizen input and is based on the community vision of Eagle's future. The City has generally welcomed developer requests for semi-annual changes to the adopted comprehensive plan—an approach that has been highly controversial and contentious. Describe how you would balance citizen priorities v. those of the development community. Articulate those circumstances you regard as valid causes for changes to or departures from the adopted comprehensive plan.

Bottomline, the existing Comp plan should be honored as is with only the rarest of exceptions. Any such exceptions should be treated with extreme importance that would require an extended period of community involvement and dialogue. Any proposed changes to the Comp plan should be clearly outlined in clear language to the community, where the motivations, objectives and options and of the requesting body should all be openly communicated to the community at large. Investors and developers who buy property should be made to clearly understand that they do not have any special entitlements to change the Comp plan. That, in my opinion, is for the community to decide.

B. Financial Management and Budget

Troubled economic times have created budget problems for most cities, including Eagle—where development and growth fees historically contributed heavily to revenue. Recent budget discussions demonstrated differing philosophies from City officials, with some members stressing cost savings and others more focused on finding revenue to continue current City operations and levels of service.

1. Describe additional revenue sources you would like Eagle to explore and develop in order to create a more stable resource base—one less reliant on growth and less vulnerable to economic downturns.

The revenue discussion should begin with first using our existing revenue resources more wisely and prudently. Second, we have a huge inventory of homes, commercial buildings that need to be occupied and developed vacant property that should be managed and utilized before new developments are granted... all of which generate further revenue.

2. Would you be ___ willing or X unwilling to support an increase in the levy rate?

3. Please characterize how you would approach reducing City expenses, should that continue to be necessary, by ranking the following elements, from 1 (first source of cuts) to 11 (12, if you list under "Other") (last source of cuts):

8___ Library

11___ Police

3___ Planning

1___ Reductions in City staff (specify department(s)) P&Z, Building

10___ Across-the-board reductions in hours worked by all City staff (v. layoffs)

6___ Reductions in pay and benefits for City staff
Benefits

9___ Parks maintenance/improvement

2___ City Hall building

4___ Mayor's compensation

5___ Council Members' compensation

7___ Contributions to regional entities (COMPASS, Blue Print, Valley Ride, etc.)

___ Other (please describe)

4. Describe the emphasis you would/would not place on expanding the City's commercial base and, if appropriate, how you would achieve that expansion.

I do not have a strong position on this right now. Further, I do not believe that the current economic climate suggest any substantial opportunity for investment in the next 12 to 18 months.

5. Describe how the development entitlements for 10,000+ new as yet un-built housing units granted over the last several years will or will not influence your position on future development applications and the City's ability to provide services to new residents. How do you see the absorption of these un-built developments being handled by the City?

This is a huge problem with massive cost burdens on our City. The shortsighted approvals of the developments demonstrate the need for new City leadership and a major shift in our plan to deal with this looming cost threat. I would like to see us

force all existing developments that have not been executed on within 12 months of original approval, come back to City Hall for reapproval. I would also want to study all fee structures and potentially increase certain fee's to improve revenue and manage the growth aspect more reasonably.

C. Infrastructure

1. What role, if any, do you see for the City in ensuring the protection of regionally-shared water resources for all area residents, including those currently reliant on private wells in the City, the AOI and the foothills?

City must influence the study of water and the effect of increased usage through growth. The City should ensure that it is closely working with County and State agencies and coordinating efforts to fully understand impacts and capacities of our finite water resources.

2. ACHD (<http://www.achd.ada.id.us/Projects/ProjectsPast.aspx>) and ITD (SHs 16, 44 and 55, Three Cities crossing) have transportation planning efforts underway for Eagle and the North Foothills, largely in anticipation of growth in both the City and the North Foothills.

a. Do you X support or ___ not support these plans?

I support efforts for the requirement to have all fundamental infrastructure in place BEFORE growth is granted to commence in any substantial manner.

b. Do you ___ agree or X not agree that development should proceed based only on contemporaneous construction of new roadways, including upgrades to existing roadways outside the development, and/or other means of transportation to provide for the impact of that development?

c. Are there specific transportation plans in place that you would like to see changed?

Admittedly, I need to do much more research and learn about such plans.

D. Foothills vision, open space and rural character, public recreation opportunities

1. Describe your vision of the foothills as a part of the community and/or the priority you would assign to the following by ranking from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important):

2___ Rights of property owners

1___ Adherence to the adopted foothills comprehensive plan and the community vision

4___ Location of density adjacent to existing and planned major highways, with preservation of central open space

5___ Preservation of wildlife habitat and restoration of native plant species

6___ Creation of an interconnected trails network for non-motorized recreation

7___ Avoidance of development in steep and visually sensitive areas

3___ Preservation and enhancement of Eagle's unique rural and equestrian lifestyles

2. Do you ___ support or X oppose (or ___ unsure) the City's plans to lease and ultimately acquire 1900+ acres of BLM land north of Beacon Light Road (proceeding east from SH16 to Willow Creek Road) for development of a regional park for non-motorized recreation?

Exactly where does the City of Eagle find the money to 'improve' this space (as obligated via the lease)?

3. The City has identified the following possible sources for funding regional park development, operations and maintenance. Indicate by a mark in the space provided those you support (leaving blank those you do not support):

___ Impact fees generated by new development (limited to park development and construction; not available for operations and maintenance);

___ General fund (available only on a fiscal year basis);

___ User fees/passes for "nonresident" users (assessed via passes for those not City residents; operations and maintenance revenue)

___ Foothills levy approved by and applied to City residents (available for development, operations and maintenance; requires voter approval of 50% + 1 votes majority; must be renewed every two years)

___ Volunteer labor and donations

4. Discussion by the Planning and Zoning Commission at recent hearings considering annexation of this BLM land has raised the possibility of creating a Community Improvement District to supplement impact fee revenues.

Do you ___ favor or X oppose (or ___ unsure) the creation of a CID?

5. Describe your vision of the regional park and/or the priority you would assign to the following elements of the City's preliminary plan (City cost estimates provided) for park development by ranking the following from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important), leaving blank any elements you do not support (in which case priority assigned to least important will be the same as the number of elements you support):

Bottomline is that we do not have the funding to create or maintain these elements. Based on past performance, I have very little confidence in the cost estimates by current City leadership. For any of these, I would wish to closely study the extreme details and require detailed presentations to even consider such projects. In all such projects, I always expect to have a clear understanding of the capital cost to create as well as a realistic detailed accounted for the expected year-over-year costs to maintain.

___ Linder Road trailhead (\$436,600 construction; \$8,000 p.a. operations and maintenance)

___ Hartley Lane Trailhead (\$193,100 construction; \$1,200 p.a. o&m)

___ Hartley Lane Restrooms (\$80,000 construction)

___ 10 miles of 2-3 foot earthen multi-purpose trail (equestrian, hikers, cyclists— \$18,000/ mile construction; \$4,000/ mile p.a. o&m)

___ 8 miles of 10-12 foot earthen multi-purpose trail through Little Gulch (\$60,000/mile construction; \$4,000/mile p.a. o&m)

___ Riding and rodeo arena—8 to 10 acres (construction funded by user groups with City providing land and infrastructure; p.a. o&m not yet determined)

___ 500-seat seasonal amphitheater located off Linder Road (\$1.26 million construction for facility, parking and infrastructure; p.a. o&m not yet determined)

Thank you for your participation.